Public comment available on preferred No Action alternative plan for Georgia Fields Site at SRS

The Department of Energy (DOE) will release a Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan on March 30 describing the proposed remedial approach for the "West of SREL Georgia Fields Site (GFS)" at the Savannah River Site (SRS). The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) will also release a draft Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit modification for the proposed remedial action for this unit. These documents will be available for public review and copying at the locations listed below. The public comment period is scheduled for March 30 to May 13, 2000.

Upon completion of the public comment period, a Responsiveness Summary that addresses public comments will be prepared. The Responsiveness Summary will be made available with the Record of Decision (ROD) and the final RCRA permit decision and will be sent to each person who submits comments. DOE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and SCDHEC have reviewed the risks associated with this unit and have evaluated cleanup alternatives. The three agencies are recommending the following action for the West of SREL Georgia Fields Site:

No Action - The No Action alternative is the preferred alternative for the GFS. This means that no remedial action will be performed at the GFS. There is no waste to treat and no institutional or engineering controls are required. Because no further action will be taken, the GFS will remain in its present condition. No capital and/or operation and maintenance costs will be involved for this action. This alternative will be protective of human health and the environment. It is also intended to be the final action for the West of SREL Georgia Fields Site.

The GFS, located approximately 1.6 km (1 mile) north of the TNX Area (a research and development designated area supporting SRS operations), is approximately 0.25 ha (0.62 acre) in area. The GFS is located north of, and adjacent to, an area formerly used by the SREL for trapping, collecting, tagging, and tracking of biological specimens. A sheet metal drift fence, approximately 76 cm (30 in) high, used by SREL parallels the southern boundary of the site. Presently, orange ball markers denote the boundary of the GFS.

The site appears to have been used as a surface disposal area for abandoned debris. Less than 50 percent of the unit area contains

debris. Debris located on the site includes one empty 55-gallon steel drum, one empty 20-gallon steel drum, six empty 5-gallon buckets, piles of burlap, wood waste, wire coils, rolls of wire, ladders, chain link fence parts, and miscellaneous kitchen pots and pans.

Information Repositories

Copies of the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan are available in the Administrative Record, which also contains the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) report for these units. The information repositories are listed below:

- DOE Public Reading Room, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina-Aiken campus, Aiken, SC;
- Thomas Cooper Library Government Documents Department, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Hard copies of the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan are available at the following:

- Reese Library, Augusta State University, Augusta, GA;
- Asa H. Gordon Library, Savannah State University, Savannah, GA.

The Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan is also available on the Internet in the SRS Home Page (http://www.srs.gov), under "Happening Now," (http://www.srs.gov/general/srs-home.htm) and on the SRS Environmental Restoration Home Page, under "Public Involvement" (http://www.srs.gov/general/srenviro/erd/pub/publiny.html).

Copies of the draft RCRA permit modification/s are available for review at SCDHEC during regular business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays, at the following locations:

SCDHEC, Bureau of Land and Waste Management 8901 Farrow Road, Columbia, South Carolina 29203 Phone: (803) 896-4000

or

SCDHEC, Lower Savannah District Environmental Quality Control Office, 218 Beaufort St., N.E. Aiken, SC 29802, Phone: (803) 641-7670

If there is interest in discussing this recommended remedial approach, a public hearing may be requested. Comments on the draft RCRA Permit modification and requests for public hearings of the Draft RCRA Permit modification should be sent to:

SCDHEC

Attn: John Litton, P.E., Director
Division of Hazardous and Infectious Waste Mgt.
Bureau of Land and Waste Management
2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201, (803) 896-4000

Plan reflects public comments Strategic Plan defines 50-year vision for SRS

Savannah River Site Strategic Plan, 21st Century Stewards for the Nation, was completed recently. This plan provides the framework of SRS missions, vision, and core values. It describes the site's current situation, defines a vision for the evolution of the site over the next 50 years, suggests actions to achieve the vision, and guides the allocation of resources toward attainment of that vision.

The plan is currently being printed and copies will be available shortly. The plan may also be found at the SRS Home Page at http://www.srs.gov.

The Savannah River Site is moving into the 21st century with a significant, enduring, and larger role in three key areas:

- Nuclear Weapons Stockpile Stewardship
- Nuclear Materials Stewardship
- Environmental Stewardship

These stewardship mission areas reflect current and future missions to meet the needs of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile; to safely and securely store, treat and dispose of excess nuclear materials, including weapons-grade plutonium; to treat and dispose of legacy wastes from the Cold War and to clean up environmental contamination.

Additionally, the plan includes a Corporate Management section that articulates the goals and objectives to ensure that the site is successful in the focus areas of Safety and Security; Technical Capability and Performance; Community, State and Regulator Relationships; Cost Effectiveness; and Corporate Perspective.

The plan was written by several teams of SRS employees and reflects the comments from over 20 groups and individuals from the public who provided over 200 comments to the draft plan.

"Because of the input from the public, the Strategic Plan is a better document, enabling us to more fully address the concerns of importance to our neighbors," said Greg Rudy, the DOE-SR Manager.

To obtain a copy of the plan, contact Jim Moore at 800-249-8155 or by email to planning@srs.gov.

Revised FONSI on SRS Natural Resources Management to be issued

DOE prepared an environmental assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-0826) to analyze the potential environmental impacts of continued management of natural resources at SRS. Based on the analyses in the EA, DOE issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on July 15, 1993.

One of the key objectives of the SRS Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) was to continue protection and recovery activities for federally listed threatened and endangered animals. The red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) was one of these endangered species. The U. S. Forest Service Savannah River Natural Resource Management and Research Institute at SRS has revised the site's RCW Management Plan. The details of this proposed plan revision were presented in the July 14, 1998 issue of the SRS Environmental Bulletin (Vol. 9, No. 11).

Upon comparison with the 1993 EA, the implementation of the revised RCW Management Plan was determined to have impacts no greater than those described in that original NEPA evaluation. The new plan, which was revised to reflect the results of several years of research on RCW management, was approved by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service on December 27, 1999. DOE needs to implement the revised RCW Management Plan to allow goals for RCW management

to be achieved within the context of the existing SRS NRMP and the site's missions.

Based on the information and analyses in DOE/EA-0826, and after careful consideration of all comments, DOE has determined that the proposed action of revising the RCW management activities on SRS is bounded by the existing EA and does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement would not be required. DOE is expecting to issue the FONSI in April 2000.

If you would like a copy of the draft revised FONSI, or the original EA and FONSI, please contact:

Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer U. S. DOE, Savannah River Operations Office Building 742-A, Room 185, Aiken, SC 29808

e-mail: nepa@srs.gov

Fax/telephone: 1-800-881-7292

Current NEPA actions affecting SRS

- Construction and Operation of the Low Enriched Uranium Loading Station and Modification to the Existing Highly Enriched Uranium Blending Facilities at the Savannah River Site (DOE/EA-1322), The EA will analyze the potential environmental consequences associated with construction and operation of a low enriched uranium (LEU) loading station and modifications to existing facilities at SRS. The proposed action would support delivery of LEU (converted from off-specification highly enriched uranium) to the Tennessee Valley Authority. The draft EA is expected the second quarter, 2000.
- Offsite Transportation of Certain Low-Level and Mixed Radioactive Waste from SRS for Treatment and Disposal at Commercial Facilities (DOE/EA-1308), The EA will analyze the potential environmental consequences associated with shipping low-level and mixed low-level waste to treatment facilities in Texas and Tennessee and/or Environcare of Utah for disposal. This draft EA is expected the second quarter, 2000.
- Revised FONSI for the Natural Resource Management Activities at SRS EA (DOE/EA-0826), In 1993, DOE prepared an EA and issued a FONSI for the continued management of natural resources at SRS. DOE needs to take action to implement a revised red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) management plan that has been approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. DOE must implement the revised plan to reflect the results of years of research on RCW management, and to allow goals for RCW management to be achieved withing the context of the existing SRS Natural Resources Management Plan and the site's missions. The revised FONSI is expected in April, 2000.
- Evaluate an Alternate Approach for the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) Glass Waste Canister Storage Facility at SRS (DOE/EA-1327), The EA will analyze potential environmental consequences associated with building and operating an onsite above-ground concrete pad for casks containing DWPF canisters. The storage casks would be made using SRS's inventory of depleted uranium trioxide powder. The draft EA is expected the first quarter, 2000.

- SRS High Level Waste Tank Closure (DOE/ EIS-0303), The proposed action is to close the SRS HLW Tanks in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, DOE Orders and SCDHEC permit requirements. The draft EIS is expected the second quarter, 2000.
- SRS Spent Nuclear Fuel Management (DOE/EIS-0279), This EIS evaluates management strategies using existing, modified and new facilities or processes for spent nuclear fuel assigned to SRS. The final EIS is expected in April 2000.
- DOE Waste Management (DOE/EIS-0200), This EIS recommends the types of wastes DOE sites would ship to other DOE sites for storage, treatment, and disposal. Transuranic, hazardous, and high level RODS have been issued. Low level and low-level mixed waste RODS were signed on February 18, 2000. For the LLW and LLMW RODs, DOE will perform minimum treatment at all sites and continue, to the extent practicable, disposal of onsite LLW at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in New Mexico, the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) in Tennessee, and here at the Savannah River Site (SRS). In addition, the Department has decided to make the Hanford Site in Washington and the Nevada Test Site (NTS) available to all DOE sites for LLW disposal. INEEL and SRS also will continue to dispose of LLW generated by the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. For the management of mixed low-level waste (MLLW) analyzed in the WM PEIS, the Department has decided to treat MLLW at the Hanford Site, INEEL, ORR and SRS, and to dispose of MLLW at the Hanford Site and NTS. The Department also has decided to amend its 1996 ROD for the NTS Environmental Impact Statement, to implement the Expanded Use Alternative for waste management activities at NTS.
- SRS Salt Disposition Alternative SEIS (DOE/ EIS-0082-S2), The proposed action is to construct and operate a process to replace In-Tank Precipation as part of the SRS High Level Waste Management System. This SEIS is on hold pending other decisions.

Current permit expires October 5, 2000

SRS seeks RCRA Part B Permit Renewal

The DOE-Savannah River Operations Office has requested that its Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA) permit be renewed. The current permit expires on October 5, 2000. This request was made by the submittal of the SRS 2000 RCRA Part B Permit Renewal Application, revision 0. A public meeting was held on February 1, 2000 to discuss this request.

The permit application is divided into 10 volumes; General Information, Hazardous Waste Storage Facility (HWSF), M-Area Hazardous Waste Management Facility (HWMF) & Metallurgical Laboratory HWMF, F-Area HWMF, H-Area HWMF, Organic Waste Storage Tank (OWST), Mixed Waste Management Facility (MWMF), Mixed Waste Storage Buildings (MWSB), Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF), and Sanitary Landfill (SLF).

The General Information volume contains information common to all the facilities. It includes descriptions of the site emergency services, security, regional hydrogeology, the Part A and a list of the Solid Waste Management Units (SWMU). Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B include updating the Part A, updating the SWMU list, adding the regional hydrogeology section, and adding the newly required pre-application meeting information.

The HWSF volume consists of four buildings and three storage pads. They are all located in Central Shops area except for one building that is located in B Area. They temporarily store hazardous waste, mixed waste, non-hazardous radioactive waste, and polychlorinated biphenyl wastes. SRS is currently shipping much of this waste offsite for treatment and disposal. Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B include expanding the treatment capacities, adding new treatment methods, updating the Contingency Plan, allowing for the receipt of waste from offsite under certain conditions, adding Subpart AA/BB/CC information, and adding/expanding the type containers to be used.

The M-Area HWMF and Met Lab HWMF have been combined into one volume. The M-Area HWMF groundwater has long been the subject of monitoring and cleanup efforts, beginning in the early 1980s. The basin itself was certified closed in 1991 to prevent further migration of contamination. The M-Area Fuel Fabrication Facility, the source of the contamination, produced fuel for SRS reactors. Waste released from the M-Area Settling Basin contained a variety of contaminants, mostly solvents. This practice was stopped in 1985 when the effluent treatment facility went on-line.

The Metallurgical Laboratory Basin was certified closed in 1992 to prevent further migration of contamination. The source of the contamination was the building 723-A Metallurgical Laboratory. Waste released from the Metallurgical Laboratory Basin contained a variety of contaminants, mostly solvents. Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B include adding Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for the Northern Sector, adding Southern Sector CAP, adding characterization and path forward for the Crouch Branch Aquifer, and adding Dense Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids CAP logic flowchart.

The F/H-Area HWMF volumes on groundwater contamination is the result of using seven seepage basins in F and H Area from 1955 to 1988 to receive wastewater from chemical separations facilities. Use of the basins was discontinued in November 1988 and certified closed in 1991. Waste released from the F/H Seepage Basins contained a variety of contaminants, mostly nitrates and some heavy metals. Treatment of the groundwater began in 1997. Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B includes updating water levels, flow direction, and flow rates, plume descriptions and maps, Groundwater Protection Standards (GWPS) list, CAP description, and changes in groundwater monitoring.

The OWST is a 150,000 gallon tank located adjacent to Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF). It was designed to contain mainly benzene, a byproduct of the DWPF process. Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B include revising to align RCRA-required equipment with that equipment required for DWPF Technical Safety Requirements (TSRs), revising to allow for suspension of some inspections when the DWPF OWST is empty, revising to eliminate requirements for foam fire suppression system, primary tank oxygen concentration indicator, secondary tank lower explosive limit indicator in accordance with DWPF TSRs, adding allowance for a grace period for missed inspections due to operational difficulties, revising inspection frequencies for OWST relief valves and thickness test, and revising the closure plan to include steps for closure of the non-radioactive tank and eliminate the requirements to dismantle the tank for closure.

The MWMF's original 58 acres received waste until 1985 and was certified closed in 1991. It received lead gloves, coveralls, soils, construction debris, waste oils, solvent rags, and irradiated scrap metal. The facility was expanded in 1991 to encompass 13 more acres that received waste until 1990

Public meeting

RCRA Part B Permit Renewal Wednesday, April 19, 3 p.m. Aiken County Public Library

SRS seeks RCRA Part B Permit Renewal, cont'd.

and was certified closed in 1999. It received solvent rags. Waste released from the MWMF contained a variety of contaminants, mostly tritium, solvents and some heavy metals. SRS is in the process of initiating construction activities to perform interim remedial action at the SW plume area in 2000.

Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B include adding a CAP for the SW plume, adding schedule for Groundwater Protection Standards (GWPS) and CAP permit modifications for NW and NE plumes, revising SW Plume GWPS list, adding GW monitoring wells at SW plume area, proposing seepline and in-stream monitoring, providing characterization data for the NW and NE plumes, providing aquifer test results, and added institutional controls for the SW plume area.

The CAP portion of the Volume VII 2000 Part B submittal is also being considered the submittal of revision 6 to the MWMF 1992 Part B. This permit modification is considered a class 3 modification. This notice begins a 60-day comment period. A public meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 19 at 3 p.m. at the Aiken County Public Library. Representatives from SRS will be available to answer questions. Written comments on the modification may be sent to SCDHEC. All comments will be considered in the final decision.

The MWSB volume consists of two buildings and three storage pads. They are all located in E-Area near the center of the site. They temporarily store hazardous waste, mixed waste, non-hazardous radioactive waste, and polychlorinated biphenyl wastes. Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B include expanding the treatment capacities, adding new treatment methods, updating the Contingency Plan, adding Subpart AA/BB/CC information, and adding/expanding the type containers to be used.

The CIF is centrally located in H Area and incinerates hazardous waste, mixed waste, and non-hazardous radioactive waste, significantly reducing the volume of waste that must be disposed. CIF began post trial burn operation in 1997. Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B include adding an evaporator to the scrubber system, changing the blowdown tanks from Subpart J to Subpart O tanks, and adding waste codes to Tables C-1 and D-1.

The portion of the Volume X 2000 Part B submittal adding an evaporator to the scrubber system and changing the blowdown tanks from Subpart J to Subpart O tanks is also being considered the submittal of revision 18 to the CIF 1992 Part B. This permit modification is considered a class 2 modification. This notice begins a 60-day comment period. A public meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 19, at 3 p.m. at the Aiken County Public Library. Representatives from SRS will be available to answer questions. Written comments on the modification may be sent to SCDHEC. All comments will be considered in the final decision.

The SLF was built in 1974, received waste until 1993 and was certified closed in 1997. Originally 32 acres, the landfill was expanded to approximately 70 acres before it was closed. It generally accepted solid waste from administrative areas, cafeterias, and industrial activities, but it also received some solvent rags. Waste released from the SLF contained a variety of contaminants, primarily solvents. SRS is currently performing interim remedial action at this facility.

Several of the more significant changes from the previous 1992 Part B include adding full scale bioremediation project (currently operating) to remediate groundwater and adding a groundwater monitoring program that incorporates effectiveness monitoring of the remediation system.

More information, including the actual permit application is available for review and copying at the DOE reading room located in the University of South Carolina Aiken library, or by contacting personnel listed in this notice (see page 1). The Permittees' compliance history during the life of the permit that is expiring is available from the Agency contact person. Written comments may be sent to SCDHEC. All public comments will be considered in the final decision.

RCRA revisions to be discussed with public

The DOE-Savannah River Operations Office has requested from SCDHEC modifications to SRS's 1992 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Part B Permit Renewal Application for Volume II, which details operations at the Site's Hazardous Waste Storage Facility (HWSF), and for Volume II, which details operations at the DWPF OWST.

The Volume II revision (Rev. 9) is in response to the Notice of Deficiency issued by SCDHEC effective December 17, 1999. The Volume VI revision (Rev. 9) proposes closure plan changes to include steps for closure of non-radioactive tanks and to eliminate requirements to dismantle the tank for closure. This notice begins a 60-day comment period. More information, including the actual permit applications, is available for review and copying at the DOE Public Reading Room located in the University of South Carolina-Aiken library, or by contacting personnel listed below. The permittees' compliance history during the life of the permit being modified is available from the Agency contact person.

Written comments may be sent to SCDHEC. All comments will be considered in the final decision. A public meeting to discuss these revisions will be held April 19, 3 p.m. at the Aiken County Public Library.

Send your comments to

J.T. Litton, Director
Division of Hazardous and Infectious Waste Bureau of
Land and Waste Management
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201-1708

SRS CAB to test new format for committee meetings

In an effort to improve SRS Citizens Advisory Board (SRS CAB) member and regulator participation in SRS CAB Committee meetings, the CAB will pilot a new one-day meeting format for committee meetings to be held on the fourth Tuesday of months in which bi-monthly CAB business meetings are not held.

The SRS CAB will test the new format in April, June and August of 2000. The three pilot meetings will be held at different times of the day and evening to determine which format optimizes stakeholder participation from all segments of the interested public.

"We hope that this new format will increase participation by our regulators, cut down on the number of evening meetings, reduce CAB member travel, and allow for committee participation by members of the Board unable to join us in the evenings," said Karen Patterson, newly elected CAB Chair. "We've changed our committee structure, so there was the

potential for more than our average three evening meetings per month, in addition to various focus group or working group meetings," said Patterson.

This streamlining effort was suggested during a Process Improvement Retreat as a way to improve CAB productivity. Although CAB member and regulator absence from committee meetings has improved recently, it has been an issue of concern among CAB members for several years. The goal is to improve participation for the regularly scheduled meetings with sufficient early notification.

"We don't want this to adversely impact the participation of those members of the public who have participated loyally over the past few years," says Patterson, "but we do think it is important that the work of the CAB be distributed among all CAB members. That is why we are meeting at different times of the day. We hope to find the best mix of CAB, regulator, and interested public participation."

Websites of interest on the Internet

Department of Energy (DOE) Home Page

DOE Savannah River Site DOE Headquarters Home Page

DOE 800 numbers

DOE Office of Environmental Management DOE Office of Waste Management

DOE Office of Science and Technology

DOE Environmental Justice Clearinghouse

DOE Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste

Management Information Center

DOE Environmental, Safety and Health

Information Center

DOE Office of Fissile Materials Disposition

DOE Office of Defense Programs

DOE Office of Independent Oversight

Site Specific Advisory Boards (SSAB) Web Pages

Savannah River Citizens Advisory Board

Savannah River Toll Free Number

Center for Disease Control

Home page

Savannah River Information

National Center for Environmental Health

Center for Risk Excellence

Home page

Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation (CRESP)

Home page

Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board

http://www.dnfsb.gov Home page

Environmental Protection Agency

Home page

Office of Solid Waste

Office of Science and Technology

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Home page http://www.state.sc.us/dhec

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Home page http://www.ganet.org/dnr/

NEPA Activities

Key Environmental Impact Statements Effecting SRS

DOE-SR NEPA Toll free line

DOE-HQ NEPA

DOE-HQ NEPA Documents

Council on Environmental Quality

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Home page http://www.nrc.gov/

Risk Related

Risk Management http://www.qest.com.au/

Issues communication http://www.gest.com.au/IssuesCom.htm

http://www.srs.gov http://www.doe.gov

http://www.hr.doe.gov/800numb.html

http://www.em.doe.gov/ http://www.em.doe.gov/em30/

http://em-52.em.doe.gov/IFD/OSThome.htm

http://em.doe.gov/stake/envjus.html

http://www.rw.doe.gov

http://www.eh.doe.gov

http://twilight.saic.com/md/ http://www.dp.doc.gov/dp_web/ http://tis.eh.doe.gov/oversight

http://www.srs.gov/general/people/srs-cab/srs-cab.html

1-800-249-8155

http://www.cdc.gov

http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/programs/radiation/

http://www.cdc.gov/nceh

http://riskcenter.doe.gov

http://www.cresp.org

http://www.epa.gov/

1-899-881-7292

http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/cleanup.htm

http://www.srs.gov/general/sci-tech/nepa/srsnepa.pdf

http://tis-nt.eh.doe.gov/nepa/docs/docs.htm

http://www.epa.gov/ost/

http://tis-nt.eh.doe.gov/nepa

http://www.whitehouse.gov/CEQ/

The SRS Environmental Bulletin

For more information on this or other environmental and compliance activities at SRS, please contact:

Jim Moore Donna K. Martin

WSRC WSRC

Aiken, S.C. 29808 Public Involvement

(803) 725-7169

e-mail: jim02.moore@srs.gov

(800) 249-8155

Access the Environmental Notice web site: http://www.SRS.GOV/general/srenviro/ envbul/ebinex.htm

The SRS Environmental Bulletin

Savannah River Site Building 742-A Aiken, S.C. 29808

